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RR RUEHROV
DE RUEHAM #5012 3600542
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 260542Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1265
INFO RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0266
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 0033
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0083
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0634

UNCLAS AMMAN 005012

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: TBIO KFLU XF JO

SUBJECT: Jordan at Maximum Alert for Avian Influenza Monitoring

REF: A. Riyadh 2412

¶B. Amman 4174
¶C. Amman 1276

¶11. Despite press reports suggesting an outbreak, Jordan has been at a maximum alert for monitoring avian influenza since late October. The alert level was activated with the onset of the annual wild-bird migratory season and also as a precaution to avert a possible spillover of bird flu from neighboring Saudi Arabia infecting poultry and birds (ref A). Dr. Nasser Al-Hawamdeh, Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) Assistant General Secretary for Livestock, explained to the press December 22, "We have an emergency ward that functions throughout the year but we have raised the state of alert to the highest level and resumed field inspection of samples by dispatching teams of veterinarians to birds farms and poultry stores."

¶12. Emboffs discussed the MOA plans with Al-Hawamdeh who noted that the Ministry's recent steps included: stricter monitoring of trade in items such as fresh poultry; a review of inspection procedures at border points; a general review of Jordan's AI preparedness plan; and, refresher workshops for all government veterinarians in detection and handling procedures for AI.

¶13. According to Al-Hawamdeh, the MOA is also following Animal Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization procedures for sampling and testing bird farms and poultry stores. NOTE: The field sampling is a major component of Jordan's active surveillance program (ref B) END NOTE.

No Human Health Spillover

¶14. Emboffs also discussed the pandemic flu preparedness steps with the Ministry of Health (MOH) Assistant Secretary General, Dr. Adel Belbessi, who noted that the current heightened alert was primarily for animal health monitoring. Belbessi highlighted that the MOH was continuing its normal human health monitoring procedures and does not believe there is any increased risk of a pandemic flu outbreak in Jordan at this time.

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